DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 385 FL 009 561

AUTHOR	Seesahai, Maureen
TITLE	Punjabis Learning English: Word Order. TEAL Occasional Papers, Vol. 1, 1977.
INSTITUTION	British Columbia Association of Teachers of English as an Additional Language, Vancouver.
PUB DATE	77
NOTE	11p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Maureen C. Sawkins, British Columbia Association of TEAL, c/o King Edward Campus, V.C.C., 2750 Oak St., Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada ($2.50 Canadian plus $.50 postage)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Contrastive Linguistics; *English (Second Language); Grammar; Interference (Language Learning); Language Instruction; Language Patterns; *Panjabi; *Second Language Learning; Sentences; Sentence Structure; *Syntax; Teaching Methods; Verbs
IDENTIFIERS	*Word Order

ABSTRACT

When teaching English as a second language to speakers of Punjabi, it is useful for the teacher to have some knowledge of the students' native language. This paper analyzes the differences in word order between English and Punjabi. The five basic sentence patterns in English are contrasted with the equivalent sentence patterns in Punjabi. Activities are suggested that can be used to teach English word order to Punjabi students or to students of other language backgrounds. (CFM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED157385

PUNJABIS LEARNING ENGLISH: WORD ORDER

Maureen Seesahai

An English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) teacher who has some knowledge of the linguistic backgrounds of his/her students can more effectively assist them to acquire English. Sometimes, however, information about a language is not easily available. One glaring example, is the lack of written material describing the Punjabi language. There are large numbers of Punjabi-speaking students in B.C., and accurate comparisons of, or contrasts between, English and Punjabi would be very helpful to the E.S.L. teacher in planning appropriate programs.

Since the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to theforeign language[1], and since one major grammatical feature in English is WORD ORDER, it should be of interest to E.S.L. teachers to see how Punjabi and English differ in this respect. It is important to keep this fact in mind when reading this paper: IN CONVERSATIONAL PUNJABI, WORD ORDER IS FAIRLY FREE[2]. Other grammatical features, the major one being inflectional rules, determine the organization of Punjabi. In formal spoken or written Punjabi, however, there is a commonly-used system of word order which can be compared to and contrasted with that of English. One way to approach such an analysis is to consider basic English sentence patterns, and their Punjabi "equivalents".

Three of the five basic sentence patterns of English, as delineated by F.G. French[3], in contrast with Punjabi are:

Legend: S(Subject) V(Verb) O(Object) C(Complement) I(Indirect)

	English	Punjabi
1	S - V	S - V
2	S - V - O_o	S - O_o - V
3	S - V - C_o	S - C_s - V

1 Lado, R., "Linguistics Across Cultures" p. 58
2 Shackle, C., "Punjabi" (Teach Yourself Books) p. 19
3 French, G.F., "English in Tables"

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Maureen Seesahai

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

FL009561

From the above it appears that Punjabi may be a verb-final language (in written form), which in fact is the case. It would be reasonable to conclude that the other two basic English sentence patterns, in contrast with Punjabi, would be:

English	Punjabi
#4 S - V ^{I}O - O	#4 S - ^{i}O - O - V
#5 S - V - O - ^{o}C	#5 S - O - ^{o}C - V

This data is confirmed in Shackle's book, "Punjabi". These differences do not appear too overwhelming, but when sample sentences from the basic patterns are considered, areas of difficulty are more apparent.

The verb to "be" is usually among those taught in the initial stage of E.S.L., and Shackle begins lesson 1 in Punjabi with this verb. Therefore it is feasible to contrast sentence pattern #3 (S - V - ^{s}C) first. This is done in Table 1. The pattern is expanded by adding modifiers, and interrogative and negative forms of the pattern are shown.

Table 1 appears to illustrate the following about Punjabi:

1) the verb is consistently placed in the final position in a sentence
2) one-word adjectives precede the nouns they modify
3) the verb is optional in negative sentences
4) there are no articles in Punjabi
5) there is no change in word order for interrogatives
6) a prepositional phrase functioning as an adjective precedes the noun it modifies

Additional data is necessary to confirm the above assumptions and give more information. Table II illustrates that a form of the verb plus an auxiliary ("be") is used to make the simple present tense in Punjabi, and that the auxiliary, but not the "main verb", may be omitted in negatives sentences. The verb has consistently been placed at the end of the sentence. The other assumptions made

TABLE I

CONTRAST: BASIC ENGLISH SENTENCE PATTERN #3

ENGLISH	PUNJABI	LITERAL TRANSLATION
The boy is Punjabi.	/mʊɳḍa pəñjābi e/	boy Punjabi is
The big boy is Punjabi.	/vəḍḍa mʊɳḍa pəñjābi e/	big boy Punjabi is
The big boy with the blue books is Punjabi.	/nilian kitāban vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍa pəñjābi e/	blues books (connective) big boy Punjabi is
The boy is not Punjabi.	/mʊɳḍa pəñjābi néiɳ e/*	boy Punjabi not is*
The big boy with the blue books is not Punjabi.	/nilian kitāban vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍa pəñjābi néiɳ/	blues books (connective) big boy Punjabi not
Is the boy Punjabi?	/mʊɳḍa pəñjābi e/	boy Punjabi is
Is the big boy with the blue booksPunjabi?	/nilian kitāban vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍa pəñjābi e/	blues books (connective) big boy Punjabi is
Who is Punjabi?	/pəñjābi kəʊn e/	Punjabi who is
What nationality is the big boy with the blue books?	/nilian kitāban vale vəḍḍa mʊɳḍa di kam kéri e/	blues books (connective) big boy of nation which is

*Normally omitted

TABLE II

CONTRAST: BASIC ENGLISH SENTENCE PATTERN #1

ENGLISH	PUNJABI	LITERAL TRANSLATION
The boy goes	/mʊɳḍə janḍə e/	boy goes "be" (aux)
The big boy goes to school.	/vəḍḍa mʊɳḍə skul janḍə e/	big boy school goes "be" (aux)
The big boy goes to school daily.	/vəḍḍa mʊɳḍə roz skul janḍə e/	big boy daily school "be" (aux.)
The big boy with the blue books goes to school daily.	/nilian kitābaŋ vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍə roz skul janḍə e/	blues books (connect.) big boy daily goes "be" (aux)
The boy does not go.	/mʊɳḍə neín janḍə/	boy "not" goes
The big boy with the blue books does not go to school daily.	/nilian kitabaŋ vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍə roz skul néin janḍə/	blues books (connect) daily school "not" goes
Does the boy go?	/mʊɳḍə janḍə e/	boy goes "be" (aux.)
Does the big boy with the blue books go to school daily?	/nilian kitabaŋ vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍə roz skul janḍə e/	blues books (conn.) big boy daily school goes "be" (aux.)
Doesn't the big boy with the blue books go to school daily?	/nilian kitabaŋ vala vəḍḍa mʊɳḍə roz skul néin janḍə/	blues books (conn.) big boy daily school "not" goes

from TABLE I appear accurate. In addition, from TABLE II it appears that, in Punjabi,

1)no "dummy" auxiliary is necessary for questions or interrogatives

2)"time" adverbials precede "place" adverbials and both (of course) precede the verb

There is no data presented here which confirm OBJECT placement, so more is needed. TABLE III provides additional information and includes basic English sentence patterns #2 (S - V - O) and #4 (S - V - I_O - O) in expanded and manipulated forms.

The "standard order" as delineated by Shackle is:

(i) Subject

(ii) Adverbs or adverbial phrases
a) of time b) of place c) of manner

(iii) Indirect object

(iv) Direct object

(v) Interrogative word

(vi) Verb

This is confirmed in TABLE III.

From the foregoing data, it seems reasonable to conclude that some features of English word order will be familiar to Punjabi students, namely:

1) In both languages, the subject tends to precede the verb in statements

2) One-word adjectives precede the nouns they modify

3) Negation precedes the main verb

4) One common order for objects is that indirect objects precede direct objects.

After checking with my two resource people, I discovered that in Punjabi, as in English, the direct object may precede the indirect object, as in English when we use "to".[4]

It must be remembered in considering the above factors as "shared" that in Punjabi the word order may vary in informal conversation. Furthermore, word order may change to emphasize one part of the sentence, similar to our way of using stress to emphasize. In other words, while English keeps the same word order for each of the following

---

[4] Dosanjh, U., and R., in conversation

TABLE III

CONTRAST: BASIC ENGLISH SENTENCE PATTERNS #2 & #4

ENGLISH	PUNJABI	LITERAL TRANSLATION
He puts a book on the table.	/ó mez te kitāb rakda e/	he table on book puts (aux)
He puts her book in her desk.	/ódi kitāb ó de desk ča rakkhda e/	he/of book she/of desk in puts (aux)
Where does he put her book daily?	/ó ódi kitāb roz kitthe rakhda e/	he (hers (she of)) book daily where puts (aux.)
Please don't put this here!	/enuŋ ethe na rakkha ji/	thisto here not put, sir
When did he put the book here?	/óne kitāb kadoŋ ethe rakkh ji/	he* book when here put
He's waiting for the boy there	/o muŋde nuŋ óthe vdīk ria e/	he boy to there waitfor aux. aux. "be"
She will certainly send us her address.	/ó sanuŋ apŋa pata zarūr pejegi/	she usto "her" address certainly willsend
Do they write him letters once a week?	/ki o ónuŋ hafte ča ik var čittiaŋ	Q they heto week in one time letters write aux.
She didn't give any coffee.	/ikhde hoŋ/ /óne ónuŋ kafi neiŋ ditti si**	she* heto coffee "not" give (aux)**

*he and she are marked as "actors" in a non-present verb tense
/ne/ = postposition "by"

**optional

sentences, Punjabi word order would change:

1) He gave the book to you. 2) He gave the book to <u>you</u> (not me)

In Punjabi emphasis would alter the position of direct and indirect as follows:

1) he marked you to book gave (aux) 2) you to he marked book gave (aux)
"by" "by"

One additional grammatical structure which is common to both languages is inflection for subject-verb agreement and tense. (Of course, Punjabi goes much further than English with inflections!)

It is clear, however, that there are many differences between the two languages, and Punjabi speakers learning English may encounter difficulties as follows:

1) Punjabi is consistently a verb-final language (in writing) and and more formal speaking), whereas English has the verb in this position only in basic sentence pattern #1 (S -V). Punjabi speakers may tend to place all verbs in the final position, particularly in the case of:

2) Present tense verbs: Punjabi has an auxiliary "be" verb just as English does (although in English it is for the present-continuous tense rather than the simple present) and it would be easy to generalize that there is a formal equivalent between the two auxiliaries, and confuse verb tenses as well as misplace the auxiliary after the main verb.
(e.g. for (The boy goes) he may say (The) boy go(es) is.)
or (The boy is going) (ing)

3) Noun modifiers in phrase form may be a "trouble spot" for Punjabi speakers, who would attempt to place all modifiers before the noun, if they transferred their formal rule into English. It must be remembered that Punjabi also has post-positions rather than prepositions, which may well add to the confusion.
(e.g. The man in the house is singing - house in man sing(ing) is.)

4) A <u>brief</u> glimpse at English adverbs and adverbials will help indicate areas of difficulty for Punjabis:

Adverb	Adverbial Phrase
I always leave	I leave at ten
I left suddenly	I worked in the house until ten
I am always late	Usually, I am here on weekdays
She can always call	She can call in the morning

In Punjabi, adverbials consistently precede the verb, and adverbials of time precede adverbials of place.
(e.g. I worked in the house until ten - I ten (until) house in worked.)

There are also, of course, English features not directly related to word order which Punjabis will likely find difficult. Some illustrated in this data are:

-the English articles a, an, and the (Punjabi has no article system)

-pronoun differentiation between masculine and feminine in the third person singular. (Punjabi uses the same word for she or he. The difference between /ó/ and /e/ is that /ó/ refers to that person or object and /e/ implies nearness of person or object (like English this).

-adjective - noun agreement in Punjabi but not in English

-the "dummy" do and the removal of the inflectional marker from the main verb when it is present (i.e. the boy goes : does the boy go?)

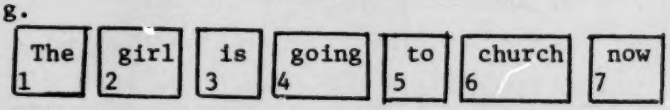
-placement of WH question words at the beginning of English sentences (Punjabi placement varies).

There are many other areas of potential difficulty not described here, but I hope I have shown that one of the major problems may well be in the area of English word order, which is of major importance in our language and not in Punjabi.

The easiest way for a person to learn anything is to add to some thing he already has become familiar with. I think this is particularly true in second language acquisition. The student needs to "recognise" some of the "new" material he is being presented with, as being similar to structures he already knows. A teacher who is aware of the potential misunderstandings Punjabi students might have, can alter the English program so that these areas become clear. For example, the idea of nearness and distance produces different pronouns /ó/ and /e/ in Punjabi. There is no reason, then, why this and that could not be introduced early in the program. The teacher of course should limit the referents to concrete objects and not people.

Some of the activities which I have found valuable in teaching word order to Punjabi students are listed below. All can be modified to suit different levels and age-groups. Students from other language backgrounds enjoy them also. In every case, the constructions used have been previously taught in class. These activities reinforce, they do not replace the teacher.

1)Sentence Scramble (whole class)
Equipment: Manila flashcards (or?) in sets which form sentences when arranged sequentially. Number the cards if necessary.
e.g.



Directions:
a) place cards on the blackboard ledge so that the students cannot see the words. (Some may be upside down and facing the blackboard.) They should be in scrambled order.

b) choose # of students (in the above case, 7) and give the sentence desired orally. The class repeats it.

c) the chosen students run to the ledge, choose a card, and arrange themselves in correct order from left - right, cards facing the class. The class "corrects" them if necessary. Everyone repeats the sentence correctly.

At this point, the teacher might do several different things:

1) give a WHO card (not numbered) to a student and ask him/her to take the right place in the sentence
   or
2) ask the group to rearrange themselves so that she (the teacher) must answer YES
   or
3) ask the class to tell which cards are telling WHERE? Give it to the first student who answers the WHERE card, and see what he does with it.

Etcetera!

2) Sentence Rummy - card game (4 players)
Equipment - a "deck" made up of words which can be used to construct # - word sentences. Blank playing cards with one word in small case letters per card are used. Number of cards and number per player vary with the length needed.

Directions:
Play the game as Rummy is played, until all the cards are gone from the centre. The student who has made the most sentences wins. (This can then become a "punctuation" exercise, in which the students copy each other's sentences and punctuate them.)

3) The Running S.
One student is given a manila card which has 'S' on one side,

'es' on the other. He moves as ordered by the class when working with third-person singular statements and manipulations in the game Sentence Scramble.

Other aids which are helpful in reinforcing word order are: selected songs such as "This is the Way I Wash my Face", "Hokey Pokey", "The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly", and others which have repetitive features which are relevant to daily usage. An excellent poem which helps with relative clauses is "This is the House that Jack Built". Stories which are taken from E.S.L. - oriented materials are excellent, and stories such as "The Six Foolish Fishermen" in which there are several repetitions of the same pattern, can be put to good use. There are many things an E.S.L. teacher can do to help the students master English word order. The above are just a few supplementary ideas.

When I began to collate information for this paper, I did so partly because I wanted some answers to questions which had been puzzling me regarding why most of my Punjabi students seemed to have a dreadful time with English word order. In finding some answers, I have been amazed at how rapidly these students had learned, considering the wide organizational difference between the two languages. I sincerely hope that further studies concerning Punjabi/vs/English syntax will be done, because this one has been largely restricted to word order, and to "simple" sentences at that! In the meantime, I hope that this paper will, in some way, be of help to E.S.L. teachers of Punjabi -speaking students.

REFERENCES

Dosanjh, Ujjal and Raminder, in conversation.

French, G.F., "English in Tables", Oxford University Press.

Lado, Robert, "Linguistics Across Cultures", Longmans Canada, 1971.

Shackle, C., "Punjabi" (Teach Yourself Books), English University Press, 1972.